

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The revolutionary dynamics
of women's liberation

—PAGE 10

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U.S. torture of Iraqis sparks worldwide outrage

Brutal, systematic abuse shows face of American imperialism

TROOPS OUT NOW!

—see editorial, page 10



AP/Anja Niedringhaus

Iraqis gather May 2 outside Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, demanding to see jailed relatives, after news broke worldwide of degradation and physical abuse of Iraqi prisoners by their U.S. captors. Abu Ghraib is at center of scandal for the occupiers.

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND SAM MANUEL

Revelations that U.S. military and intelligence personnel are involved in the routine torture of Iraqis locked up in prisons run by occupation authorities in Iraq have sparked widespread anger throughout the Mideast and worldwide.

After the appearance in the international media of photos of Iraqi prisoners brutalized by U.S. troops, the Pentagon brass announced that seven U.S. officers have been reprimanded and that six soldiers face criminal charges. No officers have been charged since the U.S. Army began an investigation four months ago into reports of mistreat-

ment of Iraqi prisoners.

Government officials in the United Kingdom, faced with an outcry over photos depicting physical abuse of Iraqis imprisoned by British troops in Basra, Iraq, have promised “appropriate action” if they determine that the allegations are true. Occupation

Continued on Page 4

Florida garment workers celebrate union victory

BY ALEX ALVARADO
AND SETH GALINSKY

FT. LAUDERDALE, Florida—Garment workers from Point Blank Body Armor and their supporters celebrated their union-organizing victory and first contract with one of the largest garment manufacturers in the region at a boisterous rally here May 3 at

the Ironworkers union hall. The event included more than 70 workers from the Point Blank plant in Oakland Park, just north of Ft. Lauderdale, which is one of the three company facilities in southern Florida. Family members, officials of UNITE and the Broward County AFL-CIO, and other supporters took part to mark the accom-

plishments of the two-year-long battle.

Virginia Salazar, a sewing machine operator originally from Cuba and one of the leaders of the union struggle, recalled the reasons the workers fought to be organized into the UNITE union. “Anytime we had

Continued on Page 10

Census report highlights changing face of U.S. farming

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Preliminary figures released from the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture show that, while the number of working farmers continues to decline, the loss of land for farmers who are Black has slowed down somewhat.

African-American farmers—who have historically faced racist discrimination by banks, the government, and agribusiness—have waged determined struggles for land over the last decade.

From 1997 to 2002, the agricultural census shows, the number of farm producers who are Black increased by nearly 9 per-

Continued on Page 4



Militant/Eric Simpson

Garment workers from Point Blank celebrate union-organizing victory. Seventy workers from plant took part in May 3 event at Ironworkers hall in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Tel Aviv pursues settlement plan, with U.S. support

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Tel Aviv has taken further steps to consolidate gains it has made recently in its drive to cripple the Palestinian national liberation struggle and secure the long-term viability of the colonial settler-state of Israel. After a majority of the membership of the governing Likud party rejected—as expected—Ariel Sharon’s “disengagement plan,” the Israeli prime minister told a meeting of party leaders he would present a new version for parliamentary approval.

Sharon and others in his government said they are confident a majority in Israel backs such a plan. This new Israeli strategy is being pushed unilaterally by the Zionist rulers to legitimize their long-term grab of Palestinian lands in the occupied territories and make the Israeli state more secure from “terrorist attacks.”

The plan includes annexation to Israel of a number of the largest West Bank settlement blocks (see map on page 7), withdrawal of Zionist settlements from Gaza, retention of military control over both occupied territories, and refusal of the right of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees to return to their land. U.S. president George Bush declared support for this proposal in mid-April—a shift from Washington’s previous

Continued on Page 6

Co-Op miners in Utah target Kingston-owned businesses

BY ANNE CARROLL
AND TAMAR ROSENFELD

SALT LAKE CITY—Striking coal miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, and their supporters picketed here on May 1 in front of A-1 Garbage Disposal. The trash company is part of the \$150 million business empire run by the Kingston family, who also own the Co-Op mine. The protest was the fifth outside a Kingston-owned company since the miners walked out in September 2003.

The strikers are fighting for safer working conditions, respect and dignity on the

Continued on Page 4

Also Inside:

- Unemployment in New York
plagues industrial workers,
rises faster for Blacks, teenagers 2
- Using pretext of ‘war on terror,’
Paris plans new curbs on rights 3
- Marchers in Ottawa, Vancouver
back women’s right to choose 9
- New Zealand: Maori protest
government land grab 11

Survey: job crisis in N.Y. hits Blacks, youth the hardest

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A recent survey of unemployment in New York, focusing on African-Americans, helps highlight the devastating consequences for working people of joblessness during a short-term economic upturn in the business cycle and the disproportionate weight of unemployment for Blacks.

Titled “A Crisis of Black Male Employment: Unemployment and Joblessness in New York City, 2003,” the report was issued in February by the Community Service Society (CSS), a privately funded group that carries out research into “social welfare” issues.

In the year since the U.S. economy came out of an official recession, overall unemployment has never fallen below 5 percent nationwide. For Blacks the figure is 10 percent across the country.

These figures are higher in New York, where unemployment was 8.5 percent citywide in 2003. Joblessness there was 12.9 percent for Blacks, 9.6 percent for Latinos, and 28.7 percent for teenagers last year.

In the three-year period between 2000 and 2003, unemployment rose 2.8 percent citywide, while it increased 5.4 percent for Blacks and 9.8 percent for teenagers.

Those without jobs also stay out of work for much longer periods—especially “blue collar” workers.

These figures, drawn from the government’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), do not include “discouraged workers”—those who have stopped looking for a job—and those who have not entered the “job market,” including women dropped from welfare rolls.

Liberals use survey to score points

Democratic Party politicians and the liberal media in New York have sought to use the CSS survey to score points against their Republican opponents, especially the administration of U.S. president George Bush.

Responding to the report’s statement—based on a particular method of analyzing

and presenting data—that only 51 percent of Black men in the city hold paying jobs, Democratic City Councilman William Perkins said, “For the Black community, that’s a depression.” According to a recent *Daily News* article headlined, “Council urges more help for blacks amid job crisis,” Lawrence Seabrook, another Democrat on the city council, “likened the plight of unemployed black men to an endangered species.”

Councilwoman Letitia James of the Working Families Party, a formally independent group that supports Democratic Party candidates and policies, said, “We should declare a state of emergency in the City of New York as a result of the high unemployment rate within the black community.”

The approach of these politicians was consistent with that of Democratic Party presidential candidate John Kerry, who claims in his campaign ads that “three million jobs were lost under Bush”—pinning blame on Republican politicians for the impact of recession and then nil job growth, rather than on the normal functioning of capitalism in a period of long-term crisis. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats are proposing any measures to redress the disproportionate impact of the long-term downward economic spiral upon Blacks and other oppressed groups, or upon industrial and other workers.

The *New York Times* headlined its February 28 article on the CSS document, “Nearly Half of Black Men Found Jobless.” It stated, “Mark Levitan, the report’s author, found that just 51.8 percent of black men ages 16 to 64 held jobs in New York city in 2003. The rate for white men was 75.7 percent; for Hispanic men, 65.7; and for black women, 57.1. The employment-population ratio for black men was the lowest for the period Mr. Levitan has studied, which goes back to 1979.”

The figures are a result of household surveys of the number of working-age people who hold official, paid employment on which they pay taxes.



Getty Images/Erik S. Lesser

Job-searching at Norcross, Georgia Department of Labor office in February. Nationwide unemployment stands at more than 5 percent; the rate among Blacks is double that.

In a telephone interview with the *Militant*, Levitan, a senior analyst with the CSS, cautioned that this measure of employment doesn’t give an accurate picture of joblessness.

The employment-population ratio does not include members of the armed forces, prisoners, and those in other institutions in its count. Moreover, those forced by bosses to accept payment under the table are not counted as working.

The official unemployment rate, which is based on the number of people without work and who are “actively seeking” it, “is an important measure of economic conditions,” Levitan said, “but it is also important to look at employment-to-population ratios because they give another view and more rounded picture.” Neither method accounts for the entire population, Levitan stressed. “There is a lack of data about many groups of people who are doing something and are not captured in the official surveys,” he said. If they were included, the number of employed in the employment-to-population ratio would be greater than CSS reports.

Likewise, counting so-called discouraged workers, unemployed workers who may have given up looking for a job for a time and therefore are not listed as officially “unemployed,” would raise the official joblessness level.

Heavier burden of unemployment

The trends cited in the report using both measures indicate, albeit fuzzily, how joblessness in New York is rising faster among Blacks and youth. Between 2000 and 2003, it says, employment for Black males in the city fell 12.2 percent, compared with 2.1 percent for their white counterparts. Almost 29 percent of teenagers in the New York labor force were unemployed, while among young adults between the ages of 20 to 24 the jobless rate was 13.1 percent. Blacks make up 27 percent and Latinos 35 percent of males in that age group—or an overall percentage of 62 percent of young men.

Capitalist politicians and the media have tried to pin this picture nationwide, and in New York City in particular, on the impact of the September 2001 attack on the World

Trade Center. But statistics in the CSS report show that the job market in the city had been contracting since December 2000 and had shed 81,000 jobs in the nine months leading up to September 2001.

The CSS report also showed that unemployment among “blue collar” workers—those with factory and related service jobs—was 10.1 percent. For those classified as “managers” and “professionals” the rates were under 6 percent.

In 2003 workers stayed out of work for longer, on average. In 2000, 60 percent were able to find work within 14 weeks of being laid off, while 25 percent still did not have a job after 27 months or more.

Three years later fewer than half of all unemployed workers were able to find jobs within 14 weeks, and 40 percent went without jobs for 27 weeks or more. One quarter had been out of work for 40 weeks or more.

Nationwide, BLS statistics show that the official number of jobless remained largely unchanged in March, at an estimated 8.4 million. This represented 5.7 percent of the workforce, down from 6.3 percent in June 2003.

Some 4.7 million workers were employed part-time in March. Respondents to the Labor Department survey said they were working part-time because their hours had been cut or they were unable to find full-time jobs.

Further reading

WHAT THE 1987 STOCK MARKET CRASH FORETOLD

by Jack Barnes

The 1987 stock market crash, the world’s largest biggest since 1929, revealed the heightened volatility of the world capitalist system at the end of the 20th century. Rising unemployment, the erosion of wages and working conditions, and the ever-present danger of financial collapse mark the period in which we live.

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Imperialism’s offensive in the Mideast

Since the occupation of Iraq, the U.S. rulers have ratcheted up pressure on Libya, Syria, and Iran, and have sided more blatantly with Tel Aviv in its assaults on the Palestinians. The ‘Militant’ arms you with the facts on these developments and campaigns around the slogan, “U.S. and all foreign troops out of the Mideast.”



European film crew inside Libyan nuclear plant January 26, after Libyan government agreed to open its facilities to imperialist ‘inspection.’

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Using ‘war on terror,’ French gov’t plans new curbs on rights

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The French government launched a propaganda offensive at the end of April to prepare new attacks on workers’ rights under the banner of the “war on terrorism” and combating “Islamic extremism.” In line with recent legislation banning young women from wearing the veil at school, Paris has sought to justify its expulsion of Muslim clerics and other measures in the name of defending “the dignity of women.”

The French interior minister, Dominique de Villepin, told the National Assembly April 27 that the government would have to curb some legal rights in order to effectively fight “terrorism,” the *International Herald Tribune* reported. He cited the March 11 bombing of a commuter train in Spain and the recent action of a French court in overturning the expulsion of a Muslim cleric as cause for curtailing democratic rights.

De Villepin argued that the bombing in Spain, in which nearly 200 people were killed, underlined the need for tighter security throughout Europe. He added that if the courts stood in the way of deporting immigrants who threatened “public order,” then France would have to change its laws. De Villepin told the French legislature that “a new balance must be found between respect for the law and the imperatives of security.”

On April 21 the French government ordered the expulsion to Algeria of Muslim cleric Abdelkader Bouziane, claiming he has links to terrorist groups. A court ruled two days later that evidence presented by the government had not proven its case and that Bouziane is free to return to France.

Bouziane is an imam at the largest

mosque in Vénissieux, a working-class suburb east of Lyon, the country’s second-largest urban center. In January French cops arrested six men from Vénissieux alleging they had links to al Qaeda and had planned a chemical weapons attack in Paris in 2002. Two other men from the town were taken prisoner in Afghanistan two years ago and are now being held by the U.S. government at its naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

French cops began investigating Bouziane last year after he issued a fatwa, or edict, calling for jihad against U.S. businesses and government buildings in France, reported the April 30 *New York Times*.

The interior ministry issued the expulsion order in February, but hesitated to act on it while prosecutors sought a legal pretext. The government then seized upon an interview published in early April in *Lyon Mag* in which Bouziane made reactionary statements citing the Koran as justification for the stoning of women accused of adultery and their beating by their husbands. Bouziane was expelled within days of publication of the interview.

De Villepin, who until March 31 served French imperialist interests as the foreign minister, and President Jacques Chirac said the government was motivated by concern for women’s rights. “If we have to change our law to avoid repeating this kind of case, which is unacceptable for us, we will change the law so we can expel people who say such things,” Chirac said at an April 28 news conference. “The government cannot tolerate the public statement of views that are contrary to human rights, attack the dignity of women and call for hate or violence,” de Villepin told the country’s legislators after the court overturned his



AFP/Getty Images/JeanPhilippe Ksiazek

French police bring Muslim cleric Abdelkader Bouziane (center) to the airport in Lyons, France, April 21 to expel him from the country on charges of “terrorism.”

order to expel the Muslim cleric.

Bouziane was the fifth Muslim cleric to be expelled from France this year on charges of “spreading a dangerously divisive brand of radical Islam,” the *Times* reported. Dozens have been expelled from the country since 2001.

Dalil Boubakeur, the official spokesperson for the French Council of the Muslim Faith, condemned the expulsion of Bouziane and accused Paris of treating imams as a “horde of foreign mercenaries without the slightest regard for the rule of law,” according to an April 28 Al Jazeera dispatch. Boubakeur said the attacks on mosques and anti-Muslim graffiti and comments had become increasingly common following the government’s decision to ban young women from wearing Muslim veils at school. The law will go into effect in September. He also charged that the French media had portrayed young Muslims as being primarily responsible for the rising number of anti-Semitic incidents in France.

France has the largest Muslim popula-

tion in Europe, estimated at 5 million, many from French imperialism’s former colonies in North Africa. There are 1,500 imams. The interior ministry says most Muslim clerics in France are not French citizens and do not speak French. De Villepin has said that the government must help train “moderate” imams and encourage the emergence of what he called a tolerant “French Islam,” the *Times* reported.

France’s Muslim community has long been a favorite target in the French rulers’ drive to beef up the powers of the police and chip away at democratic rights. In 1995 a hysterical campaign against “Islamic terrorism” by French government officials and the bourgeois media was the backdrop for the launching of the Vigipirate “anti-terrorist” plan. Under the plan, heavily armed police and French soldiers were deployed in the streets, at train stations, and airports to randomly stop and search non-white immigrant workers as part of an “anti-terror” witch-hunt.

Washington eases sanctions on trade with Libya

BY DOUG NELSON

“Libya has moved with impressive speed to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction,” Thomas Lantos, a Democratic Party representative on the House International Relations Committee, said April 23.

The California congressman expressed the bipartisan position in Washington toward the concessions made by the Libyan government in disarming its defensive weapons systems and on other fronts.

In return for Libya’s compliance with U.S. demands, the Bush administration lifted most of the restrictions on U.S. investment in Libya and announced that it would set up a Liaison Office in Tripoli—a step toward reestablishing diplomatic relations.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi was also invited to Brussels April 26-27 as a guest of European Commission president Romano Prodi, one month after a visit to the capital, Tripoli, by British prime minister Anthony Blair. The Belgian visit was Qaddafi’s first trip to Europe in 15 years.

Major European and U.S. companies, especially those involved in the oil trade, are now gearing up for a race to get their hands on Libya’s potentially lucrative oil reserves.

However, Libya remains on the State Department’s list of state “Sponsors of Terrorism,” which means that Washington continues to maintain restrictions on Libyan exports, hold frozen Libyan assets in U.S. banks, and ban direct flights.

A U.S. official said April 29 that before removing it from the list, U.S. government representatives would meet with the Libyan government to gain assurances that it “has given up terrorism,” reported Reuters. The State Department announced that Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria will remain on the list.

The United Nations Security Council lifted UN sanctions on trade with Libya in parts and technology for aviation, arms, and oil exploitation after the Libyan government acknowledged responsibility for the blowing up of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, which killed 270, and agreed to pay victims’ families \$4 million

each. Libya has agreed to pay an additional \$6 million to each family if Washington lifts the remaining sanctions by the end of July.

According to the *New York Times*, U.S. president Bush said April 23 that Libya must commit itself to “a complete renunciation of all ties to terrorism” before the sanctions are erased.

Tripoli’s concession related to Lockerbie, Bush said, do “not prejudice the removal of Libya from the terrorism list or detract from Libya’s obligations to fulfill its continuing Pan Am 103 commitments.”

In the December announcement on Libya’s weapons programs, Qaddafi gave the go-ahead for officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency to carry out surprise inspections of its one chemical weapons factory and other sites of the UN body’s choosing.

In an official statement at that time, Tripoli “confirm[ed] that we will abide by the [Nuclear] Non-Proliferation Treaty...by taking this initiative, it wants all countries to follow its steps, starting with the Middle East, without any exception or double standards.”

Washington is using Libya’s example of capitulation to pressure other countries, such as north Korea, Iran, and Syria, to take similar measures. Lantos said he hoped that “rogue states such as Syria and Iran will learn the lesson: responsible behavior means much better relations with the U.S.”

Concessions on weapons programs

In February the Libyan government signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. Following the timetable in the treaty, Libya agreed to destroy all such weapons by April 2007.

In March, Libya handed over boxes of files on its chemical weapons research to officials of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In the preceding months, under the gaze of UN inspectors, Libya destroyed 3,500 bombs and pledged not to develop missiles with a range beyond 190 miles.

According to a report in December by the BBC, “U.S. officials said Libya had also ac-

knowledgeed cooperating with North Korea to develop extended-range Scud missiles.”

The relaxation of sanctions means that for the first time since 1986 U.S. oil companies will be free to do business in Libya. Spokesmen for the Oasis Group, a consortium made up of Marathon, ConocoPhillips, and Amerada Hess, announced that it plans to resume operating the group’s 41 percent stake in Libya’s giant Waha oil concession. Waha currently produces about 300,000 barrels a day, about 20 percent of national production.

Another company, Occidental, plans to reap high returns by resuming its oil and natural gas operations there. “Our goal is to [ensure] returns on capital at least as good as the average return from our current mix of oil and gas assets,” said chairman and chief executive Ray Irani.

European oil companies are also anxious to stake claims alongside their U.S. rivals. Following Blair’s visit in March, Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell signed a deal worth up to \$975 million for gas exploration off the Libyan coast.

Another British firm, defense and aerospace contractor BAE Systems, is currently negotiating aviation projects.

For Further Reading

In New International no. 7

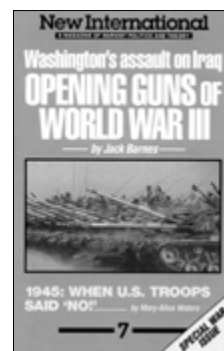
Opening Guns of World War III: Washington’s Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

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Utah miners' strike

Continued from front page

job, and to be represented by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Seventy-five people chanted and carried signs to expose the Kingston family for their abusive labor practices in the mine. A number of women's rights supporters were part of the crowd. "The Kingstons exploit women and children in every possible way," said Andrea Moore-Emmett, president of the Utah state organization of the National Organization for Women. "They break labor laws, they don't pay their workers a decent wage. Some workers are paid in scrip. It is some of the worst exploitation in the U.S."

There were representatives at the rally from the UMWA, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Employees, and Utah Jobs with Justice. The action was built through flyers and announcements on local radio station KRCL.

Many drivers passing the protest honked to show their support. Truck drivers were especially adamant, sounding their horns loud and long.

A brother and sister from a family that broke from the polygamous Kingston clan two years ago attended the picket to support the miners. They, their parents, and siblings had worked at the mine until their father was fired and they moved out. As they looked on, Daniel Kingston came out of A-1 Garbage Disposal to provocatively photograph

protesters. This is a common attempt at intimidation employed by the Kingstons against strikers outside the coal mine.

Daniel Kingston has been convicted of child abuse for belt-whipping his daughter, Mary Ann Kingston, for fleeing a forced polygamous marriage to her uncle at age 16. "Her illegal 1997 marriage, in which she became the 15th wife to her then-33-year-old uncle, David Ortell Kingston, became known to police after her father, John Daniel Kingston, beat her unconscious for trying to leave the union the following year," the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported last year.

At the May 1 rally, Co-Op strike leader Gonzalo Salazar thanked Salt Lake unionists and others for their solidarity and encouraged backers of the strike to help strengthen the picket line in front of the mine.

In Huntington, the union is encouraging strikers who have gotten jobs at other mines in the area to take stints on the picket line before or after work. Many coal mines in the area are hiring and a number of strikers have gotten jobs, reducing the number of strikers available for full-time picketing.

Retired UMWA miners have also responded to the union request. Two weeks ago the line was bolstered by retired UMWA members while 15 strikers attended mine safety classes. The union worked with the Mine Safety and Health Administration to hold the



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Co-Op strikers and supporters picket A-1 Garbage Disposal in Salt Lake City, Utah, May 1. Company is part of Co-Op mine owners' \$150 million business empire.

classes in Spanish. Miners need this certification to apply for work at other mines.

"I sincerely believe that if the Co-Op miners stay together they will win this battle," said Bob Fivecoat, retired UMWA member from Local 9958, who worked at the nearby Sunnyside Mine for 25 years. "They will win this fight not just for themselves, but for the people that will come

after them. When we went on strike we always did it for the miners that would be coming after us to work in the mine. If you stay together, you win together."

Local 9958 members are retirees and theirs was the first mine workers unit in this area to come to the picket line to offer support. Since that time they have continued to join in strike solidarity activities.

U.S. torture of Iraqi prisoners sparks outrage

Continued from front page

forces have locked up some 8,000 Iraqis in U.S. military prisons since Washington and London invaded Iraq last year and overthrew the government led by Saddam Hussein. The majority of the prisoners are civilians "picked up in random military sweeps and at highway checkpoints" following the invasion, according to a feature article by Seymour Hersh in the May issue of the *New Yorker* magazine. They have largely been subjected to indefinite detention with no charges against them. Most of the 8,000 are locked up at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, which was a notorious dungeon under the Hussein regime.

On April 28 the CBS program "60 Minutes II" showed photos it said were taken at the Abu Ghraib prison. The photos de-

picted naked Iraqi men stacked in a human pyramid, with U.S. soldiers standing nearby. One man had a slur in English written on his body. Another showed an Iraqi man who was reportedly forced to stand on a box for hours with a hood on his head and electrical wires attached to his body. He had been told that if he fell off the box he would be electrocuted.

A photo published in the *Times* of London showed a female U.S. soldier grinning and pointing at the genitalia of a naked Iraqi prisoner as if she was holding a weapon.

The London-based *Daily Mirror* published photographs of British troops beating and urinating on prisoners.

International outrage

The images, which have circulated in-

ternationally through the media, caused a public uproar in the Mideast and other nations with large Muslim populations.

"The very brutal actions of American soldiers, the systematic plan to torture Iraqis, to kill them, to rape them, is outrageous," said Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi, according to the May 4 *International Herald Tribune*.

His words echoed the response by newspaper editorials and politicians throughout the region. In Iraq, where the revelations sparked widespread condemnation, even

members of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council felt compelled to protest and demand a "full" investigation.

In face of the international outcry, U.S. president George Bush said April 30 he was "disgusted" at the reports of mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners and that any soldier found guilty of abuse would be punished. "That's not the way we do things in America," he claimed. British prime minister Anthony Blair said that if the photos of British soldiers abusing Iraqis proved genuine, he

Continued on Page 6

Changing face of U.S. farming

Continued from front page

cent—from 26,700 to more than 29,000.

The numbers of Latino farmers and those who are women also rose during the same five-year period.

At the same time, the total number of farms continued its historic gradual decline, as thousands of exploited farmers face a brutal choice: be forced off the land, or go into debt to increase their acreage and productivity. Between 1997 and 2002 the total number of farms declined from 2.62 to 2.13 million—a drop of nearly 4 percent. The total acreage fell by 1.6 percent, while the average farm size grew by 10 acres to 441 acres.

The government figures also show that a higher number of working farmers have a hard time making ends meet. Nearly 60 percent of farms reported annual income of less than \$10,000 in 2002, and another 12 percent income between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

The figures also show that making a living solely by working the land remains difficult for many. Some 55 percent of farmers of all income levels reported working days off the farm to make ends meet in 2002—a drop from 62 percent in 1997.

At the extreme ends of the income spectrum, only the poorest and wealthiest farmers grew in number over the five-year period. In 2002 there were 19 percent more farms with sales of \$2,500 or less, and 0.6 percent more with income of more than \$500,000.

The government figures highlight "the changing face of agriculture" in the United States, the upstate New York *Sullivan County Democrat* reported April 27. The 848,000 women working the land in 2002 made up more than one-quarter of all farm operators. Over the preceding five years, the number of "principal operators" who were women increased by 13 percent—from 210,000 to 236,000.

This figure can be misleading, because many farmers decide to list their spouse as the main owner of the business for tax purposes.

The number of farmers of "Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin," in the USDA's language, increased by 50 percent to 50,443 over the five-year period.

Between 1997 and 2002 the number of Black farmers increased by nearly 9 percent to a total of 36,000, while American or Alaskan Indians grew by 20 percent, totaling 24,000.

Farmers who are Black in the United States have a long history of struggle against racist discrimination in government lending and other assistance.

A 1997 class action lawsuit against the USDA, backed up by a protest campaign led by Black farmers, helped to publicize the consequences of the racist policies of government agricultural agencies. Federal policies reinforced the impact of the broader migration from rural areas in the South to cities and industry in the north. In 1920 there were 900,000 Black farmers in the United States. In 1997, their number had dropped to 26,785. The percentage of farmland owned by Blacks in the same period dropped from 14 percent to 1 percent.

The *Sullivan County Democrat* also gave a brief picture of farming in New York state, the nation's fourth-largest dairy producer and home to 37,500 farms. "While the number of farms nationwide dropped 3.91 percent from 1997–2002, the state of New York dropped less than one percent over the same time period," it reported. In fact, "New York reported a 1.013 percent growth of farms from 2001 to 2002. Approximately 25 percent of the state's land area...is dedicated to agricultural production."

Milk is New York's leading agricultural product, accounting for more than half of the industry. The state is the third-largest milk producer in the country. In New York, the number of African American farmers grew by 1 percent between 1997 and 2002, according to the USDA figures.

D.C. laundry workers win union contract



Militant/Lea Sherman

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Chanting, "*Si se puede*" (Yes, we can!) followed by "*Si se pudo*" (Yes, we did it!) Sterling Laundry workers returned to work here April 12 after a seven-month struggle to win union recognition for UNITE and a contract. Wearing their union T-shirts, 38 workers returned to the job with 10 others to be recalled in 90 days to the industrial laundry.

The union reported that the company agreed to a "card check" process whereby UNITE won recognition when a majority of workers demonstrated their support by signing union cards.

UNITE organizer Mario Rodríguez told workers the three-year contract includes raises of 25 cents and 35 cents per hour, company-paid health insurance, and a pension. Workers won additional holidays, including Martin Luther King's birthday.

The workers went on strike Sept. 8, 2003, against Sterling, which provides laundry and dry cleaning for hospitals, hotels, and federal agencies in Washington, D.C., northern Virginia, and Maryland, and pays workers as little as \$6 per hour. A month earlier a majority of the 110 workers in the plant had signed union authorization cards.

—LEA SHERMAN

Meat packers sign up for ‘Militant’ and ‘PM’ subs

BY PAUL PEDERSON

“At week six of the subscription drive we are at a total of 70 *Militant* and 95 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions sold to packinghouse workers around the country,” said Lisa Rottach in a May 3 report to socialist meat packers on the *Militant/PM* spring circulation campaign. A meat packer in Omaha, Rottach is the organizer of the nationwide eight-week campaign by socialists working in slaughterhouses and packing plants in the United States whose goal is to sell 233 subs to the two publications.

“We are slightly ahead on our *PM* subscription goal, but we’ve lost a little ground on the *Militant*,” she said. “In the last two weeks of the drive we need to average 20 *Militant* subscriptions a week to make the 110-sub goal.”

San Francisco campaigner Ryan Scott reported that five packinghouse workers have signed up for subscriptions there. “We sold at the shift change outside a plant where I used to work,” Scott said. “During that sale, one of my old co-workers signed up for an introductory sub to the *Militant* and another decided to renew. We did a second shift-change sale at another plant. In the course of the week, socialists working at that plant collected three more subscriptions.”

“Two of my co-workers from Smithfield were at the massive April 25 march for abortion rights,” reported Janice Lynn, who works at the meatpacking giant’s plant in the Washington, D.C., area. “In the lead-up to and af-

ter the march, we had many discussions on the job around abortion rights. I let my co-workers know where I stand on the issue, and it looks like at least one *Militant* subscription will result from the effort.”

The goals taken by socialists in the trade unions are an important component of the international campaign, which aims to net 2,000 new subscribers to the *Militant* and 600 to *Perspectiva Mundial* by May 17.

Registering the progress they have made toward their local goals, supporters in eight cities increased their quotas last week, bringing the overall total closer to the international goal. The *Militant* total was 7 percent ahead of schedule as of May 4.

Campaigners face a bigger challenge with *Perspectiva Mundial*. They need to sell 263 *PM* subscriptions over the next two weeks.

The sub drive doesn’t stop at the U.S. borders. Partisans of the *Militant* campaigned with the paper during May Day marches in Sweden, Canada, and France.

“Supporters of the *Militant* from Gothenburg and Malmö, Sweden, as well as Oslo, Norway, teamed up to campaign at the May Day demonstration here,” reported Catharina Tirsén from Gothenburg. “We set up two book tables and sent teams fanning out into the crowd at a couple of demonstrations here, including one in the Gothenburg suburb of Hammarkullen protesting the impending closure of a health clinic, and another that was organized by the ruling Social Democrats.”

Socialists in Sweden have organized a Supersaver Sale on a range of Pathfinder titles. Ten of these discounted books were sold at the two rallies. “In all, eight subscriptions to the *Militant* and one to *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold that day,” said Tirsén. “This puts us over the local goal in Gothenburg by more than one-third.”

A similar Supersaver Sale organized in France led to



Militant/Natalie Stake-Doucet

Sales campaign table at May Day protest in Montreal: *Militant* campaigner Michel Prairie talks to workers checking out the books.

success at the Paris May Day demonstration. “A total of 42 books and pamphlets was sold from our literature table at the event,” reported Derek Jeffers. “The bestseller was *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.” Sankara led the 1983–87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso, formerly a French colony. Eleven copies of the pamphlet were sold, Jeffers reported.

During a large May Day rally in Montreal, members of the Communist League sold 11 subscriptions to the two socialist publications as well as a number of books. A worker from Venezuela, who was part of the contingent for the UNITE garment and textile workers union, signed up for a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* after seeing its in-depth coverage on the class struggle in that country.

\$51,000 to go in last two weeks of ‘Militant’ fund

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

“We made a big leap toward our goal of \$3,500 at a fundraiser on May 2,” said Tony Dutrow from Houston. “The collection took us to almost \$2,500 paid.” At the meeting, Sam Manuel, a *Militant* staff writer, spoke about U.S. imperialism’s worldwide offensive, calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and other occupying troops from Iraq. “Manuel took on the self-serving liberal claim that the invasion and occupation of Iraq are ‘Bush’s war’—a statement designed to herd votes for the Democratic Party presidential campaign of John Kerry, who supports the occupation,” said Dutrow.

This kind of spirit, concentrated work, and attention to detail is needed from supporters around the world to collect the remaining \$51,000 in pledges for the *Militant* fund drive in the next two weeks. This is a major challenge, since \$42,000 has been collected in the previous six weeks. But it is doable.

At a fundraiser in Chicago the same weekend, *Militant* staff writer Paul Pederson spoke on “Resisting the Israeli Regime’s Military Boot: the Palestinian Struggle for National Liberation.” In the discussion that followed, one person asked why the Israeli regime receives such wide support in the United States—a reference to open backing for the colonial-settler state by successive U.S. governments. Pederson said that Tel Aviv serves as a bulwark for imperialist domination in the Middle East. He also described how Israel is a death trap for the Jews. The 30 participants contributed \$750.

Through similar events, discussions on the job and at plant gates, collections at street tables set up to sell socialist literature, and phone banking to reach every person who has made pledges and others, it will be possible to meet the \$85,000 goal by the May 17 deadline. In fact, all supporters should shoot for collecting and sending in every penny of the \$93,000 that has already been pledged internationally.

New *Militant* readers, the big majority of the 1,600 people who have bought subscriptions the last six weeks, are especially urged to consider making a donation.

The fund drive provides a big slice of the annual budget of the *Militant* and its sister magazine in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*. It helps cover the weekly expenses of producing, printing, and shipping the two publications,

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The Fight for Workers’ Rights Today. Speakers: Dave Paris, University of Pennsylvania graduate student union organizer; John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 14, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5.

Brown v. Board of Education: The Fight for Desegregation—Then and Now. Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party. Fri. May 21, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Donation: program, \$5, dinner, \$5. *Both events at 5237 N. 5th St. Tel: (215) 324-7020.*

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Spring Subscription Drive March 20–May 17: Week 6 of 8					
Country	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold
NEW ZEALAND					
Christchurch	26	24	92%	1	0
Auckland	25	20	80%	1	0
N.Z. total	51	44	86%	2	0
UNITED STATES					
Birmingham	30	31	103%	8	3
Des Moines	50	47	94%	25	19
Chicago	100	93	93%	35	27
Newark*	125	115	92%	35	21
Washington*	85	77	91%	20	13
Los Angeles	135	122	90%	50	24
Omaha*	70	63	90%	40	37
Houston*	65	58	89%	15	9
Pittsburgh	50	44	88%	3	2
New York	200	175	88%	60	37
Atlanta	55	48	87%	20	6
Twin Cities	75	64	85%	35	18
Philadelphia*	70	58	83%	10	4
NE Pennsylvania	45	37	82%	10	4
Boston	85	69	81%	50	20
Utah*	40	32	80%	15	14
Cleveland	30	23	77%	8	4
Miami*	95	70	74%	18	10
Tampa	30	22	73%	10	5
Detroit	50	36	72%	8	3
San Francisco	120	86	72%	40	14
Western Col.	30	16	53%	15	5
Seattle	60	28	47%	10	3
U.S. total	1695	1414	83%	540	302
CANADA					
Montreal*	30	35	117%	11	10
Toronto	50	27	54%	7	12
CANADA total	80	62	78%	18	22
SWEDEN					
Gothenburg*	22	19	86%	4	3
Stockholm	15	10	67%	6	3
SWEDEN Total	37	29	78%	10	6
UNITED KINGDOM					
Edinburgh	20	17	85%	0	0
London	50	37	74%	10	3
UK total	70	54	77%	10	3
AUSTRALIA	45	34	76%	7	4
ICELAND	18	11	61%	1	0
Int'l totals	1996	1648	82%	588	337
Goal/Should be	2000	1500	75%	600	450
IN THE UNIONS					
Country	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA					
AMIEU	10	6	60%		
UNITED STATES					
UFCW	110	70	64%	123	95
UMWA	50	29	58%	12	7
UNITE	50	20	40%	40	22
Total	210	119	57%	175	124
CANADA					
UFCW	13	5	38%	5	2
UNITE	9	0	0%	5	4
Total	22	5	23%	10	6
NEW ZEALAND					
NDU	2	0	0%	1	0
MWU	2	0	0%		
Total	4	0	0%	1	0
SWEDEN					
Livs	4	0	0%	1	0
*raised goal					

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees’ Union; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America.

\$85,000 Militant/PM Fund March 20—May 17: Week 6 of 8			
	Goal	Paid	%
New Zealand	1,600	807	50%
Tampa	1,300	1,040	80%
Utah	1,500	1,170	78%
Miami	1,700	1,294	76%
Los Angeles	8,000	5,816	73%
New York	11,000	7,460	68%
Newark	3,500	2,262	65%
Cleveland	1,200	770	64%
Philadelphia	3,300	1,864	56%
Detroit	3,000	1,595	53%
Washington D.C.	2,800	1,435	51%
Houston	3,500	1,640	47%
Pittsburgh	3,800	1,700	45%
Boston	3,000	1,210	40%
San Francisco	8,500	3,425	40%
Atlanta	5,000	1,925	39%
Birmingham	2,000	720	36%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,180	30%
Omaha	440	125	28%
Northeast	1,600	450	28%
Seattle	6,000	1,630	27%
Chicago	5,000	815	16%
Western Col.	2,000	300	15%
Des Moines	1,100	150	14%
U.S. Total	83,240	39,976	48%
Sweden	500	100	20%
United Kingdom	1,000	20	2%
Canada	5,000	10	0%
Australia	1,500	0	0%
France	300	0	0%
Iceland	200	0	0%
Other		1,010	
Int'l Total	93,340	41,923	49%
Goal/Should be	85,000	63,750	75%

U.S. torture in Iraq

Continued from Page 4
would “condemn it utterly.”

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, spokesman for the U.S. forces, announced that seven commissioned and noncommissioned officers would be reprimanded, although their names and ranks will not be published. Six soldiers are being criminally investigated for involvement in the incidents. “We’ve got to demonstrate to the people of Iraq that we’re taking swift action,” Kimmitt said.

A classified U.S. Army report, copies of which were obtained in early May by several major U.S. newspapers, details some of the incidents of brutalization in the Abu Ghraib prison. The report, by Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, concludes that the problem was “lack of training” and “poor morale” by U.S. military police.

Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, who oversaw the U.S. military prisons in Iraq until quietly being suspended in January, defended herself by saying that soldiers had been pressed by army intelligence officers to “soften up” prisoners before interrogations. While the conclusions are a whitewash of the fact that such methods of torture and brutalization have long been a routine practice by U.S. and other imperialist occupation forces, the report does offer a graphic glimpse of such practices.

Pattern of torture and abuse

According to the *New Yorker* article by Seymour Hersh, a well-known liberal journalist, the Taguba report cites numerous instances of “sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses” of Iraqis committed by members of the 320th Military Police Battalion at the Abu Ghraib prison between October and December of last year:

“Breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees; pouring cold water on naked detainees; beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair; threatening male detainees with rape; ...sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick, and using military working dogs to frighten and intimidate detainees with threats of attack, and in one instance actually biting a detainee.”

The report notes that CIA officers and “interrogation specialists from private defense contractors”—companies that hire former CIA and other government agents—played a prominent role in running the torture and interrogation regime at Abu Ghraib.

Hersh quotes Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick, a former prison guard from Virginia and one of the six soldiers now facing prosecution, who in a letter to relatives last November described the interrogation of an Iraqi prisoner under the control of the “OGA,” or “other government agencies—the CIA and its paramilitary agencies.” Frederick wrote, “They stressed him out so bad that the man passed away. They put his body in a body bag and packed him in ice.... The next day the medics came and put his body on a stretcher, placed a fake IV in his arm and took him away.”

In other words, they tortured him to death and covered up the killing.

Hersh reports that the incidents of torture became public when one of the soldiers assigned to Abu Ghraib, Specialist Joseph Darby, became increasingly outraged and spilled the beans.

Since the international uproar over the torture of Iraqis by the U.S. military, numerous former prisoners have been quoted in the media giving similar graphic accounts of their own.

“Some Iraqis say Abu Ghraib is something of a sanctuary compared with what happens in other U.S.-run prisons around the country,” a May 4 Reuters dispatch reported. It quoted Abdullah al-Dulaimi, who reported that he had been held in a U.S. detention center near the Syrian border for a month in January. Al-Dulaimi said that he and other prisoners were sodomized with sticks, and once he was placed in something called “the coffin,” a wooden box too short to stand up in, for two days. “We were beaten, deprived of sleep, and humiliated,” he said.

The human rights organization Amnesty International reported that the incidents of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. and British forces were not isolated. Nicole Choueiry,

the group’s Mideast spokesperson, said it had detailed “scores” of reports of mistreatment over the past year but the occupation authorities in Iraq had ignored them. “We have said there are patterns of torture,” she said, referring to the U.S.-British forces. After the story broke on CBS on April 28, the Pentagon announced that Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller had arrived in Iraq to take charge of the U.S. military prisons. U.S. officials say he is well qualified for the job.

Miller was previously the commander of the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

U.S.-backed force in Fallujah

Meanwhile, after a month-long siege of the Iraqi city of Fallujah, U.S. Marines pulled back from some of their positions in early May, giving the initial impression they would hand over some responsibility for day-to-day policing in the city to a new U.S.-approved force of several hundred Iraqis.

U.S. commanders announced May 3 that a former Iraqi general, Mohammed Latif, will lead the new Fallujah Brigade. As we go to press, however, the *International Herald Tribune* and other big-business dailies were running front-page headlines such as “Plan is put on hold for turnover of Fallujah.”

Since early April, occupation forces have waged an offensive against combatants in Fallujah who have launched attacks on U.S. troops. Fallujah, a city with a majority-Sunni Muslim population, was a base of the Baath Party during the Saddam Hussein regime. It has been a center of armed opposition to the occupation.

As the Iraqi brigade began its operations in Fallujah, U.S. officers made it clear they will remain in charge. Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, spokesman for the U.S. forces, said, “Any suggestion we’re handing over responsibility or withdrawing is patently false,” the *New York Times* reported May 1. Marines have remained at their positions in the Jolan neighborhood in the northwest part of Fallujah, where fighting between



Photos from Abu Ghraib prison show brutality of U.S. occupation forces. Top, undated picture of prisoners bound and hooded on floor. Inset, man forced to stand for hours on a box with electrical wires fastened to him. His torturers told him that if he fell he would be electrocuted.

Marines and insurgents has been heavy. U.S. officials have said they are seeking to get the estimated 2,000 or so insurgents to give up their heavy weapons.

Initially Pentagon spokespeople announced April 30 that the Fallujah brigade would be headed by Jassim Mohammed Saleh, a former general in the Saddam Hussein’s Republican Guard. That day, Saleh rode into the city wearing his old uniform with its crossed swords and eagle on the epaulets. He was cheered by hundreds of residents along the streets who waved the old Iraqi flag, the *Times* reported.

While some in the Sunni population may have been pleased by the naming of a former Hussein official, the appointment sparked protests by Shiite leaders, who accused Saleh of having taken part in the Republican Guard’s bloody crushing of a Shiite uprising in March 1991, shortly after the 1990–91 U.S.-led war against Iraq. After urging the Shiites to revolt, Washington turned a blind eye to the Hussein regime’s suppression of the rebellion.

Following the uproar from Shiite leaders, Washington chose another ex-general, Latif, to lead the force. “Unlike Saleh,” a



Reuters article reported, “Latif appears to have anti-Hussein credentials.... An intelligence officer, he was exiled under Saddam and may have spent time in prison.” Saleh may remain as a battalion commander in the brigade.

The appointment of former Iraqi generals is part of an effort by U.S. officials to recruit experienced officers who served under the Hussein regime. Two others have been tapped to serve as chief and deputy chief of staff of a new national Iraqi armed force that is to consist of 35,000 soldiers.

Tel Aviv pushes to legitimize settlements

Continued from front page
public stance on the settlements.

Israeli ultrarightists campaigned for maintaining control of all settlements and organized protests against any pullout from Gaza. These forces succeeded in getting a majority in the May 2 nonbinding Likud vote, a result anticipated for weeks by most observers.

On April 27, Sharon had stated in an interview with Israeli TV Channel 10 that his government’s response to Palestinian protests will be even more punishing than at present, once his “disengagement plan” is enacted and settlements have been pulled out of the Gaza Strip.

Sharon claimed that with the pullout completed, Palestinians would not be able to say they are resisting direct occupation. “Since we will not be in their territory, there will be no room for this argument anymore, and the reactions will be much harsher,” he said.

“After this failure, the Israeli government should immediately resume negotiations with the representatives of the Palestinian people,” said an aide to Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat, after the May 2 vote.

As the debate has unfolded, Tel Aviv has continued its more than month-long offensive against the Palestinians. The majority of the raids have been targeted assaults aimed at wiping out the leadership and most active cadres of political factions and armed groups that have continued to organize resistance to Israel’s occupation, focused in particular on Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades—an armed group with ties to the Palestinian Authority.

Eight Palestinians were killed in Israeli raids on the West Bank over April 24–25, among them a lecturer at the Arab-American University in Jenin. Israeli troops said they killed him by mistake because he matched the description of a “wanted

Hamas operative.” Israeli forces have assassinated two central Hamas leaders over the past month. On April 28, Israeli soldiers shot and killed Thair Abu Surur, accused of being a member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, on the outskirts of a Jewish settlement near Jenin on the West Bank. Ali Barghouti, the nephew of the imprisoned leader of the Brigade, Marwan Barghouti, was arrested the next day, less than a week after he and 19 others had been instructed to leave the Palestinian Authority headquarters by Arafat in a bid to avoid an Israeli raid on the complex.

Israeli armored vehicles and troops entered the West Bank town of Tulkarm earlier in the week and began conducting house-to-house searches. Two Palestinians—claimed by Israeli officers to be local leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad—were killed in the operation. That week, the Israeli Army also raided the Khan Yunis camp in Gaza, destroying six homes and damaging five others, and the Al-Farah camp near the West Bank town of Nablus, where Subhiya Abu Libada, 50, was killed.

Tens of thousands of Gaza Strip settlers used the April 27 celebrations of Israeli Independence Day to demonstrate their opposition to Sharon’s plan. The day marks the establishment of the colonial-settler state in 1948. Palestinians refer to it as *al-Nakba*—the catastrophe.

Following the establishment of Israel the Zionist rulers launched a war, extending their grip over 78 percent of historic Palestine and driving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into exile. A subsequent 1967 war extended Israeli control to include the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The day before the celebrations Israeli soldiers killed a 14-year-old boy and wounded a 15-year-old girl who had wandered near the military cordon encircling the Nissanit settlement in northern Gaza. Some 7,500 Israelis live in the Gaza

settlements, or less than 1 percent of Gaza’s population, but cover more than one-fifth of its land. Some 1.3 million Palestinians are jammed into the remaining territory.

The task of maintaining a permanent military cordon around the settlements in Gaza, a center of political and military resistance to the occupation, represents an insoluble security headache for Tel Aviv.

Both Tel Aviv and Washington present the relocation of the Gaza settlers as a unanimous gesture to the Palestinians.

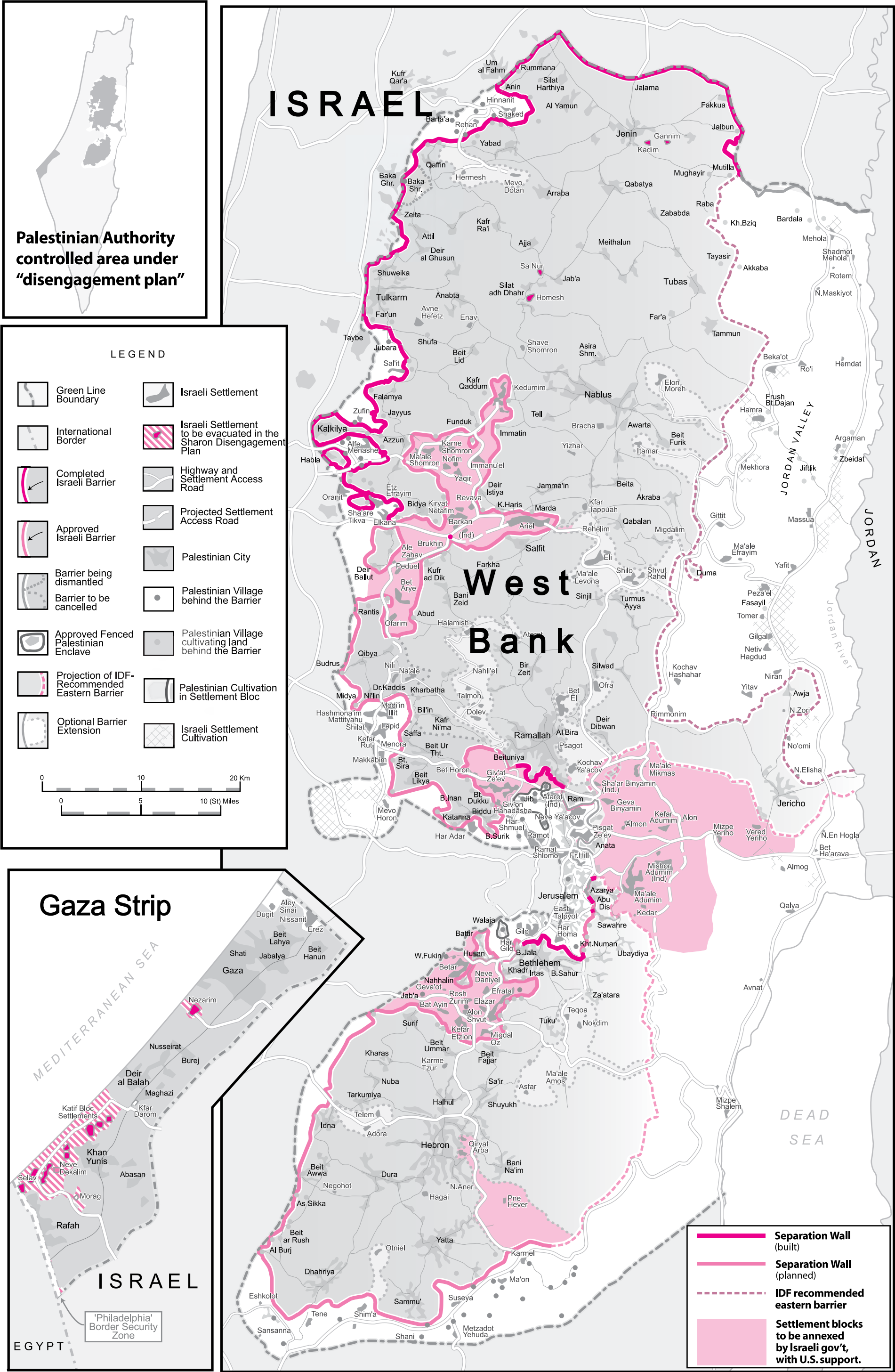
Sharon’s plan would formally annex five West Bank settlements and the surrounding land, where some 75 percent of the 223,000 West Bank settlers currently live.

According to the plan’s official text, Tel Aviv would control the movement of both people and goods to and from Gaza, and maintain its grip on “taxation arrangements and the customs envelope.”

The Israeli regime would also “supervise and guard the external envelope on land [and] maintain exclusive control in the air space of Gaza, and will continue to conduct military activities in the sea space of the Gaza Strip.” The plan leaves open the possibility that the southern border with Egypt may be turned over to Egyptian border control at a later date. Sharon’s government has also announced plans to build a massive trench along the Israel-Egypt border to counter the construction of supply tunnels by Palestinian fighters, according to an April 28 AFP dispatch.

The “disengagement” plan states that, “Israel will examine, together with Egypt, the possibility of establishing a joint industrial zone on the border of the Gaza Strip, Egypt and Israel.” It added that Tel Aviv may leave in place the Erez Industrial Zone inside Gaza, if “appropriate security arrangements” are established. Employing 4,000 people, the zone is an open-shop, low-wage investment area in which thousands of Palestinian workers toil.

Tel Aviv's land grab: West Bank settlements



Congo, 1965: UN role in Lumumba's death

Below is an excerpt from *Revolution in the Congo* by Dick Roberts, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. The pamphlet was first published in 1965, shortly after the governments of Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the United States organized an intervention by a mercenary army to shore up the armed forces of the pro-imperialist Congolese government against an insurgent liberation movement. The imperialist intervention enabled the Moise Tshombe government to eventually defeat the rebels.

The excerpt is from the chapter titled, "Background to the Congo." It begins with the winning of formal independence from

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Belgium on June 30, 1960. The Congolese National Movement won a majority in elections following this victory, and Patrice Lumumba became prime minister. Belgian troops then organized the secession of the mineral-rich Katanga province by Tshombe, a wealthy plantation owner and businessman.

At Lumumba's request, United Nations troops flew to the Congo. When UN commanders made it clear that they would not drive the Belgian forces out or challenge the Katanga secession, Lumumba requested outside support from the Soviet Union to intervene "should the Western camp not stop its aggression." The disastrous outcome of these events is recounted be-



Patrice Lumumba (right) with aides after capture in 1960 by Brussels-backed Mobutu dictatorship. UN troops stood by as they were beaten and later executed.

low. Copyright © 1965 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY DICK ROBERTS

By July 30 the Belgians had built up a force of over 10,000 troops, and the UN army had refused to enter Katanga. On August 2nd, Antoine Gizenga, Lumumba's right hand man and delegate to the UN, told Hammarskjöld:

"We do not understand that we, victims of aggression, who are at home here, are being systematically disarmed [by the UN force] while the aggressors, the Belgians, who are the conquerors here, are permitted to keep their weapons and their means of inflicting death."

In Katanga, Belgian troops crushed uprisings of Congolese soldiers and miners, and protected Tshombe's efforts to suppress opposition from minority leaders in the Katanga parliament. The UN closed broadcasting stations in Leopoldville and commanded Lumumba not to meddle in Katanga.

According to Under-secretary Ralph Bunche, the UN's mission was to "pacify

and then to administer the Congo..." From the very outset, it was clear that the UN did not recognize the duly elected government of Lumumba, and intended to restore a pro-Belgian, pro-U.S. government.

However, world pressure, not only from the Soviet bloc, but from newly independent African nations which threatened to draw their armies out of the UN force, demanded that the UN live up to Lumumba's request. At this point, the tactics of U.S. and Belgian imperialism temporarily diverged.

The United States recognized the necessity of a temporary maneuver to avoid international criticism...

Consequently, the United States pressured the UN to end Belgian occupation. On August 21, Hammarskjöld told the Security Council: "The Belgian chapter in the history of the Congo in its earlier forms is ended. The UN...is in charge of order and security."

By this time the Congo crisis had had a second important divisive effect, this time on the Congolese themselves. Elements of the next largest political party after the Congolese National Movement, the Abako Party, led by Kasavubu, threw their cards

in with United States interests.

Kasavubu, who had been powerless in the original government, now took sides against Lumumba, demanding that he be ousted, and sending a separate delegation to the UN. This gave the UN a considerably stronger hand in the Congo, even though many UN members, led by Nkrumah, held that Lumumba was the head of the only legitimate Congo government....

Unfortunately, Lumumba continued to rely on appeals to the UN, undoubtedly supported in this futile effort by the Soviet Union. Khrushchev held the ill-advised position that "Dag, not the UN," was responsible. Instead of exposing the UN as a pawn in the hands of the State Department, and building an independent military force in the Congo to protect the legitimate government, Lumumba and his Soviet allies played into the hands of the imperialists and Kasavubu.

On September 5, Lumumba was summarily removed from office, Soviet representatives were ordered out of the country, and a military dictatorship was established under Col. Mobutu. In the UN, the independent nations strongly opposed these moves, blaming them on Belgium, and demanding the restoration of Lumumba—all to little avail. Overridden by the U.S. and her UN lackeys, their motion to restore Lumumba was defeated November 22 by a vote of 53-to-24.

Again Lumumba temporized, this time fatally. Remaining in Leopoldville until the end of November, his belated effort to escape was doomed to fail. On December 1st, Lumumba was seized, publicly mauled in a truck before U.S. TV cameras and imprisoned in Leopoldville; this while UN forces stood by.

On January 18, Kasavubu, in return for a "round-table conference" with Tshombe, handed prisoner Lumumba over to the Belgian stooge. A January 18 AP dispatch reported that on Lumumba's arrival at the Katanga airport, Swedish-UN soldiers watched while "Lumumba and the other two were dragged off the plane.... They were clubbed, hit in the face with rifle butts, kicked and pummeled."

And, as it became clear upon UN investigation months later, Lumumba and his two aides were subsequently murdered. Their deaths were reported by Tshombe, February 12.

May

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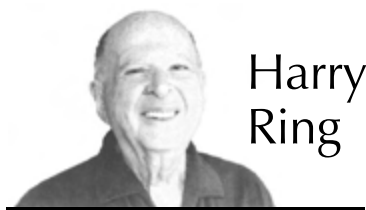
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How civilized—“Raytheon beam controls mobs—Enemy troops, crowds disabled, but it’s temporary”—Headline, *Arizona Daily Star*.



Harry Ring

Not “faith-based”?—In Florida, charter schools are privately run but get tax dollars. One in

Pensacola has been charged with hiring out students to do roadwork. They attend school an hour a day and work the rest. They get paid, but the school takes a cut.

Free enterprise—In Ohio, when their three-year-old collapsed, the low-income parents called Snell, an ambulance service that didn’t accept Medicaid. The family knew that ambulances taking Medicaid were unreliable, and the Snell service was said to be better. Medicaid pays a bit over \$119. The Snell company bashed them with a bill of \$799.29. Co-owner Joan Snell graciously declared,

“They can pay \$5 for the rest of their lives.”

Blair’s concerned “Labour” gov’t—In England, several hundred cataract patients were subjected to defective lens implants. Somehow calcium accumulated on the lens with consequent cloudiness. Damage suits are under way.

Package deal—An activist in pushing for religion in the work place, Harvard fellow Laura Nash explains: “This is about self-improvement, good behavior, good conscience and networking. It’s

all very American.”

To do or voodoo?—“[Calif. Gov.] Schwarzenegger has long to-do list to boost business”—News headline.

The sponsors too?—“Bill to penalize corrupt officials quietly dies”—Headline on California legislature story.

Didn’t bust the family?—In Carlsbad, California, cops showed up with a warrant and a dog to search for an indoors marijuana garden. The warrant was issued on the basis that Dina Dagy’s electric

bill was \$250 a month. (The police regularly scan utility bills to see if anyone’s expending undue energy to raise pot). The cops checked out Dagy and her three youngsters. They found that Mom’s dishwasher and laundry machines ran all day. There were three computers, and the children didn’t relate to turning off lights. Dagy has demanded a formal police apology. Authorities respond they already apologized, verbally.

Thought for the week—“It’s hard to believe a high utility bill would be enough to issue a state warrant.”—Dina Dagy.

Canada marchers defend women’s right to choose

BY PATRICIA O’BEIRNE

OTTAWA, Canada—Hundreds of people marched here April 25 to support a woman’s right to choose and to demand expanded access to abortion facilities across Canada. The protest was part of a nationwide day of action called by the Pro-Choice Action Network and Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, timed to coincide with the massive pro-choice March for Women’s Lives in Washington, D.C. (see report in last week’s *Militant*).

Marches and rallies were also held in Vancouver, Toronto, and other locations in Canada across at least five provinces.

At the end of the march, organizers presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Henry Morgentaler for his prominent part in the fight for the right to choose. In 1975, Morgentaler was sent to jail for 18 months for breaking the country’s repressive abortion laws at his clinic in Montreal, Quebec, which he had opened six years earlier.

He was released after 10 months following widespread protests. In 1988 the Canadian Supreme Court struck down the country’s antiabortion laws.

Morgentaler told the rally, “In Canada,

the victory is not complete. There are four provinces that refuse to pay for abortions.” Linda Cappe-rauld from Planned Parenthood added, “Less than 18 percent of hospitals in Canada provide abortions—it’s great that we have the right to choose, but it’s a pretty empty right without access.”

A recent newsletter of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League said, “the shrinking pool of hospitals that are willing or able to provide abortions is a great obstacle for women, especially in rural or northern communities.”

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN AND CHRIS HOEPPNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—“Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide,” chanted 200 supporters of abortion rights at the national day of action protest here on April 25. The demonstration was organized by a number of student and women’s rights organizations, including Students for Choice at the University of British Columbia, the Pro-Choice Network, the Vancouver Women’s Health Collective, and the British Columbia Women’s Centre.

The protest was enthusiastic, militant, and young—a show of hands at the rally indicated that more than half the marchers were under 35. “I’m here because I want to have the choice,” Caeli, 16, a high school student at Vancouver Technical School, told the *Militant*.

Simon Fraser Uni-



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

March in defense of a woman’s right to choose abortion in Ottawa, April 25.

versity student Karen McAthys said that she had joined the demonstration because “our right to choice is at risk and every day it’s a fight.”

Marchers carried signs reading, “My Body My Choice,” “Keep Your Laws Off My Body,” and “Speak Up For Women’s Choice.”

Speakers at the rally described the history of the fight for abortion rights. Participants were urged to visit picket lines set up by health-care workers at 350 hospitals and other facilities across British Columbia. Some took up the invitation after the rally, joining picket lines at St. Paul’s hospital.



Militant/Bjorn Tirsén

Henry Morgentaler addresses April 25 action in Ottawa

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 18, 1979

More than 11,000 Canadian nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, are completing their eighth month on strike. In this long battle, they have closed down the biggest nickel mine and smelter complex in the world.

Members and families of United Steelworkers Local 6500 went through an unusually hard winter. But as spring floods cover towns in the area, the strikers are holding solid in defense of their working conditions.

Inco, the arrogant imperialist giant that dominates Sudbury, is hurting. The huge stockpile it accumulated in hopes of discouraging a strike is being used up rapidly, and there has been an unexpected increase in the demand for nickel.

The spirit and solidarity of the strike has even forced local business interests to go along with the needs of the strikers by allowing delays in home and car payments.

The heating and housing committee of the local, serving throughout the winter, successfully prevented any attempts to freeze out strikers or drive them out of their homes.

Strikers have been touring Canada for months speaking to union and at support meetings. Contributions in April alone will total about \$250,000. This is in addition to more than \$1 million per month in strike benefits from the USWA strike and defense fund.

In a phone conversation on May 3, Wilf Collin, a member of the union local executive board, pointed out that the solidarity the strike has received from unionists—in Canada especially, but also from the United States, Great Britain and even Poland—has had a big effect on keeping up morale.



May 17, 1954

The CIO Textile Workers Union of America has joined the growing body of unions, AFL and CIO, in calling for a shorter work-week with no loss of weekly pay.

At its national convention held in Atlantic City, the TWUA delegates on May 5 unanimously endorsed a program calling for a 35-hour work week at 40 hours pay. A number of other important unions have raised the slogan of the 6-hour day, 30-hour week with 40 hours take home pay.

Soloman Barkin, research director of the textile union said that the 35 hour work week is the “first step” necessary to “stem the tide of depression” in the textile industry.

The resolution adopted by the convention, however, did not call for the shorter work-week as a contract demand on the companies. It appealed to Congress to set up an “industry-labor-public” agency to enforce a basic 35-hour week. No real union action was proposed.

The appeal of the program for a shorter work-week with no loss of weekly income, embodied in the “30 for 40” slogan is increasing with the continued rise of industrial mass unemployment.

By finagling with the figures and including the pre-Easter seasonal rise, the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics managed to produce a “decline” in unemployment between March 10 and April 10. They claimed a drop of 260,000 to a total of 3,465,000.

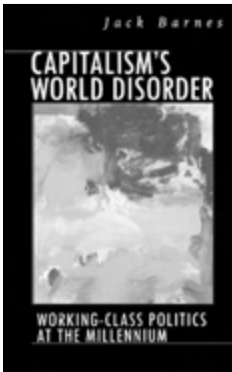
But in manufacturing—the decisive economic sector—unemployment rose another 250,000 in the same period.

For Further Reading

Capitalism’s World Disorder

Working-Class Politics at the Millennium
by Jack Barnes

The social devastation and financial panic, the coarsening of politics and politics of resentment, the cop brutality and acts of imperialist aggression accelerating around us—all are the product not of something gone wrong with capitalism, but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle and selfless action of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. *In English, Spanish, and French.* \$23.95



Abortion is a Woman’s Right!

by Pat Grogan

Why abortion rights are central to the struggle for the full emancipation of women, and why the labor movement has a vital stake in this fight. *In English and Spanish.* \$4.50



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U.S. troops out of Iraq now!

Millions of working people around the world are outraged by the horrific accounts and photos of Iraqis tortured by U.S. occupation forces that have come to light. Those images do not depict an aberration. They reveal the real face of the U.S. rulers and their imperialist system.

U.S. officials are trying to whitewash these crimes by attributing them to “rogue” individuals, “lack of training,” or other excuses. They hope they can simply give a few officers a slap on the wrist and get back to business as usual.

But as the facts come out, they confirm a pattern of torture and degradation of prisoners as a routine practice, not only at the notorious Abu Ghraib dungeon but throughout the U.S. military prisons in Iraq. Several thousand Iraqis, picked up in random military sweeps and at highway checkpoints, have been locked up indefinitely with no charges against them—just like the 600 men imprisoned at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba.

In face of the international outrage, George Bush declared his “disgust” at reports of mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners and said, “That’s not the way we do things in America.”

But Bush can’t speak for “America” because there is no such thing. There are *two* Americas: that of the handful of billionaire families that rule this country, and that of workers and farmers. These are opposing classes with irreconcilable interests.

George Bush, John Kerry, and other Republicans and Democrats in the White House and Congress should be ashamed of *their* America—the one they are responsible for running. They have utter disrespect for human dignity.

Working people in the United States, on the other hand, are not responsible for Washington’s brutalization of our brothers and sisters in Iraq and elsewhere. In fact, the U.S. rulers’ conduct

abroad is an extension of their daily brutality against workers and farmers at home. Their record can be seen around the world: from the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan (facts about the torture of prisoners by U.S. forces there are beginning to come out too) to the widespread sexual abuse of women by the U.S. military around their bases, from Korea to Kosova.

The ruthless assault by the imperialist rulers worldwide has its domestic counterpart in their war on working people on the home front. It includes the broadening use of the political police in frame-ups, wiretapping, and disruption operations. It includes the daily police violence against working people. It includes the bosses’ increasingly savage job speed-up, disregard for safety, layoffs, and attempts to cut Social Security, Medicare, and other hard-won social gains.

Some spokespeople of other imperialist countries have feigned indignation at the reports of torture in Iraq under the U.S. boot. But Paris, Madrid, London, and other imperialist powers all have had a similarly heinous record of oppression and violence for more than a century. Just ask the peoples of Algeria, the Western Sahara, and Ireland, who have fought to be free from their claws.

Washington and other oppressor powers are confronting the fact that widespread abhorrence of torture and the death penalty is a growing historical trend. This tendency is part of the long-term strengthening of the working class, which makes it easier to expose the nature of the imperialists when they use such barbaric methods of rule.

The labor movement should protest the brutal treatment of Iraqi prisoners by the occupation forces. We should demand: U.S. and all occupation troops out of Iraq now! U.S., NATO, and UN troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, Yugoslavia, Haiti, Colombia, and Guantánamo!

Revolutionary dynamics of women’s liberation

Below is an excerpt from *Revolutionary Dynamics of Women’s Liberation* by George Novack, published by Pathfinder Press. It first appeared in the *Militant* on Oct. 17, 1969. It is a brief examination of the central role the fight for women’s equality has played for two centuries in the general struggle for political democracy and civil rights against the prevailing institutions, customs, and standards from the feudal era to today.

Novack explains that the subordinate status of women is a permanent feature of bourgeois society because it is an integral component of capitalist exploitation. As a result, the struggle for the emancipation of women from their status as a second sex cannot be separated from the line of march of the working class toward the revolutionary conquest of power. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY GEORGE NOVACK

Male predominance and female subordination is a permanent fixture in bourgeois society because this relation of inequality is an integral component of the mechanism of capitalist exploitation. Women are oppressed both within society as a whole and within the family. The fountainhead of that double degradation is their economic dependence upon the male wage-earner who is the initial recipient and disburser of the household income. If she does not have an outside job, the woman as daughter, sister, wife, mother and homebody relies for her ration upon the husband, father, and brother, who are in turn dependent upon the employer who buys their labor power.

In the second place, capitalists require not only cheap but constantly renewed supplies of labor power, which must primarily come from the younger generation. Women have the prime responsibility for raising children. Their unpaid or poorly recompensed labors in the family household serve to lower the costs of reproducing and renewing the labor force.

These costs would be much higher if the capitalist regime had to take over the multiple services provided gratis or at minimal expenditure by the family setup and the domestic drudgery of married women. The socialization of such services would have to be paid for by taxation, which would in part fall upon the capitalists. This shift would increase the cost of the most vital factor of production, the work force which creates value, and reduce whatever advantage accrues to the national capitalist class in that respect.

Third, where women work in large numbers in industry, trade, offices, schools and the professions, discrimination against them is directly profitable to the employers. Degradation and domesticity keep them in the category of lower-paid labor. The capitalists always benefit from maintaining national, racial and sexual differentials in income and status among the work force. The working class as a whole would be a far more homogeneous and formidable antagonist if all discriminations and divisions within it were eliminated.

Fourth, women are a detachment of the reserve army of labor required by the capitalists during periods of labor shortage. This supply can be impounded or tapped according to the fluctuating rate of the accumulation of capital. During wartime, women can be mustered out of the household and drawn into the productive processes, as was done during the first and second world wars. Then, with the end of hostilities, they can be sent back to the family hearth, there to be kept in storage until capital needs to recall them again. The family home is a depot where surplus labor is deposited and kept in mothballs at least expense to the profiteers.

Prime targets

Fifth, females of all ages are the prime target of the advertising hucksters who must induce them, by fair means or foul, to purchase all kinds of commodities, useful and useless, from gadgets to cosmetics. In this con game even the appliances which are supposed to relieve and lighten household toil become devices for fastening the family to the credit companies.

Social as well as economic reasons lead the possessing classes to shore up the cult of the family. The ordinary urban family with the male at its head acts as a stabilizing and conservatizing agency in an otherwise unsettled world. It is a corral where the domestic servant works for the master in the kitchen, nursery and dining room.

Though the family nest may often provide the sole sanctuary from the buffetings and harassments of a cruel outside environment, it fosters immersion in purely private concerns, narrowness of outlook and exclusiveness among its members. Here attempts are made to tame, discipline and conservatize adolescents. All sorts of backwardness, from religion to racism, are nurtured within its walls.

These ever-present factors are more potent than long-standing prejudice in preventing the capitalist regime from giving women the freedom they desire. The rulers can under duress bestow upon women the same formal juridical, political and constitutional rights that men possess: the right to own and dispose of property, the right to vote and hold office, and the right to divorce, although these rights may be curtailed in practice. They can even be pressed to legalize birth control and abortion.

Bourgeois reforms

But just as the bourgeois revolution transformed the Southern chattel slaves into impoverished landless freedmen and then returned them to new forms of bondage, so bourgeois reforms have allowed women to escape from being a complete chattel of the male master and become a “free individual” in the bourgeois sense. What they have not done is to release women from the grip of the men and give them equality in the decisive spheres of social life.

The exploitative structure of their system sets limits on the scope of the freedoms the monopolists can grant to any segment of the oppressed. Just as the American capitalists have failed to give equality to the blacks a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, so they have not truly emancipated women. They cannot make good on their promises of “liberty for all” because they lack the material incentives and class impulses to do so.

Socialist revolution

It will take a thoroughgoing reorganization of the entire social setup from the economic foundations up to and including family relations before women can eradicate the causes of their inferior status and the evils flowing from it. In order to accomplish that, a socialist revolution, which will transfer state power and the ownership of the means of production from the monopolists to the majority of the people, must be carried through.

These are the lessons to be learned from the disappointing results of the democratic epoch in improving the position of the female sex and from examining the actual role of women, and especially working-class women, in the functioning of American capitalism today.

Florida garment workers

Continued from front page

something to say the company would say ‘there’s the door,’” she said. “That’s when we looked for the union. Why? Because we wanted justice, dignity, and rights.”

Some 175 workers went on strike for six months, from August 2002 until February 2003. The unionists returned to work after the National Labor Relations Board found the company guilty of unfair labor practices and ordered it to reinstate the strikers and three union militants it had fired before the walkout began. The contract between Point Blank and UNITE took effect April 26. The company’s two other plants in the area—at Deerfield Beach and Pompano Beach—are not covered by the union contract.

Dozens of photos from the strike were projected on a movie screen during the event, showing workers picketing in the rain, taking part in solidarity events in the region, cooking food in the strike headquarters, and dancing on the picket line.

Hanging on the wall was a banner that read: “Making history in the South: UNITE Southern district.”

Arcine Rasberry, manager of the Florida district of UNITE, chaired the meeting.

Strike leader Isma Sadius told the unionists, “I was arrested for fighting to get this contract.” He was arrested July 18, 2002, when he led a delegation of workers into the company offices to demand union recognition after a majority of workers at the plant had signed union cards. A few weeks later, after a third union backer was fired, the strike began. “We need to applaud ourselves because we have sacrificed so much to win this contract,” he said.

Sadius led the audience in chants in Creole of “UNITE never gives up.” Several times during the program workers chanted in Creole and Spanish. Unionists at Point Blank include workers from a dozen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Roughly one-third of the workers are Haitian.

Bruce Raynor, national president of UNITE, told those attending the victory celebration that “a determined group of workers who were tired of being treated other than as human beings finally decided they’d had enough.”

“This is the wealthiest country in the history of mankind,” said Raynor. “Justice is for the wealthy.” But this strike and this victory show workers “have the power to change that if we stand up to them and stick together.”

One of the provisions of the contract is the right of union representatives to enter the factory. For the last two years union officials have met workers just off company property. Raynor announced that union officials would enter the plant May 5.

Also speaking from the platform was a representative of U.S. Congressman Alcee Hastings.

Scott Cooper, Southern Region Organizing Director for UNITE, thanked all those who aided the strike. They included, he said, the Ironworkers, Jobs with Justice, Service Employees International Union, Unite for Dignity, and Socialist Workers Party.

Union members at Point Blank have supported struggles by other unionists. Dozens of workers signed a card in solidarity with striking coal miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, and donated \$150. Milagros Santos read a letter from the Co-Op miners thanking the UNITE members at Point Blank for their support.

“Your victory is an example for us,” the message from the United Co-Op Miners said. “Like you we are determined to go forward until we win a real union and be represented by the United Mine Workers of America.”

At the end of the program dozens of workers danced to the rhythm of a popular Spanish-language chant, “*En la lucha del pueblo, nadie se cansa*” (In the people’s struggle, no one falters).

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New Zealand: Maori protest gov't land grab

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Protesting government moves to undercut their historic claims to the use, title, and development of coastal lands and waters, thousands of Maori have joined a national march—or *hikoi*—as it travels the length of the North Island.

The hikoi set off April 22 from Cape Reinga, a rural community at New Zealand's northernmost tip. As it travels south to Wellington, marches, rallies, and meetings are being held in cities and towns along the way. A second hikoi, departing May 3, is traveling down the North Island's east coast. A march on parliament will be held May 5 when the two hikois arrive in Wellington.

"The government is aiming to take away rights that have been ours for thousands of years," Hone Harawira, one of the protest's central organizers, told *Militant* reporters April 29. "They're taking control of assets, which they can sell, exploit, trade in, without consultation with anyone."

The May 5 protest in Wellington, the capital city, will coincide with the introduction in parliament of the Labour Party government's Foreshore and Seabed Bill. The proposed legislation will confiscate the foreshore and seabed that are part of Maori coastal lands. But coastline areas in the hands of corporations and other "private landowners"—mainly non-Maori—will be untouched. At the same time, the legislation would overturn the right of Maori to have claims to ownership of foreshore and seabed addressed in court.

The Maori people, an oppressed nationality, are the indigenous people of New Zealand, numbering around 15 percent of the total population of 4 million.

The hikoi set off April 22 from Cape Reinga, an isolated rural area, with a march of 250. In between marches into and out of major cities and towns, teams of runners are traveling in relay to ensure the entire distance—some 700 miles—will be covered on foot.

Several thousand joined the protest as it arrived in Auckland April 27, in a march over the city's harbor bridge. A similar number marched the next day through

Manukau city in south Auckland.

After smaller turnouts in Huntly and Ngaruawahia the morning of April 29, some 5,000 took part in a midday march and rally in the center of Hamilton city. The April 30 march and rally in Rotorua drew 4,000.

In Hamilton, Maori students at Waikato University organized to feed the thousands of marchers, many of whom had traveled to the city from nearby towns. They arranged donations of food and spent the previous day collecting fruit off the ground from orchards. One of the students, Hariata Wehi, told the *Militant* that if the government legislation was passed then "Maori will be nothing. We will have nothing left." Already, she said, "we have to pay to learn our own language."

As the overwhelmingly Maori crowd marched along Hamilton's main street, chants, songs, and the sound of numerous conch shells rang out amidst a sea of flags and banners. "Not one more bloody stone!" said one banner opposing the proposed land confiscation. "Government of thieves, established since 1840," said another, referring to the year that marks London's formal colonization of New Zealand. "Maori seabed, For shore!" read a larger banner at the front of the march, a slogan that was also a popular chant.

"We're marching for justice," Hone Harawira told the crowd at the Hamilton rally. Many high school students took part in the march. Some came with the permission of teachers, while others said they had decided to miss classes for the day so they could participate.

Asked why she was marching, Jynelle Northover, a 14-year-old high school student, said "we don't want new laws imposed over our foreshore and seabed. We have the right to have guardianship over them." Fayenza, who was marching with another group in their school uniforms, said they were "marching to protect our Maori land."

Vanessa, who described her job as "home duties," said she was marching because "enough is enough!" Ngawai King, a teacher, told the *Militant* she had traveled



Militant/Malcolm McAllister

Thousands of Maori and their supporters march April 27 in Auckland, New Zealand, to press demands for title to foreshore (beaches) and seabed.

to Hamilton to march because, "If you don't stand up you get stood on."

A young printing factory worker said he had just found out that morning the march would be in town. He and a co-worker had persuaded their boss to let them off for a half-day to attend.

Buoyed by the numbers who had turned out, many marchers in Hamilton discussed among themselves if they could organize to go to Wellington for the march on parliament. "I've just found out we're going!" said a retired train driver.

A carved marker pole—or pouwhenua—is being carried at the head of the hikoi. It is the first time this pouwhenua has been used since it was carried to lead the historic 1975 Maori land march, which also traversed the route from Cape Reinga to Wellington. That march heralded an upsurge in mass struggles by Maori for the return of land, for recognition of the Maori language, and other national rights.

The gains won through those struggles are now widely viewed by Maori as under threat, both by the Labour government's legislation and other recent pronouncements, and by the policy course signaled by the leader of the opposition National Party, Donald Brash, who has called for opposing affirmative action and any separate national rights for Maori.

The Foreshore and Seabed Bill is the government's response to a Court of Appeal decision in June 2003 that would have allowed Maori to claim ownership of areas of the foreshore and seabed. Maori tribes in the South Island's Nelson-Marlborough region had gone to court saying that they had been denied licenses in the growing marine farming industry because of racist discrimination by the region's local government. The Court of Appeal decision was a result of their efforts to redress this discrimination.

To justify robbing yet more land, government and opposition politicians alike demagogically asserted that should Maori win any claims to have rights over areas of foreshore and seabed, they would deny "ordinary New Zealanders" access to the beaches. Growing tracts of the coastline are in fact becoming private property through investment in private marinas, golf courses, luxury beachfront dwellings, tourist ventures, aquaculture, and the like. Most Maori, like other working people, have not benefited from this "development."

Under its proposed new legislation, the government will limit Maori court claims for customary rights solely to traditional practices such as the protection of burial sites.

Labour arranged the support of the rightist New Zealand First party to garner enough votes to pass the legislation in parliament, after two Maori Labour members of parliament indicated they would not support it. One of the two, Tariana Turia, a member of the Cabinet, announced April 30 she was resigning from the Labour Party and parliament in protest and would stand for re-election in a by-election.

Janet Roth contributed to this article.

Brooklyn bakery workers say 'no' to givebacks

BY DAN FEIN

BROOKLYN, New York—Sixty-five bakery workers have been on strike against Acme Cake Company since they walked out April 25 at 3:00 a.m. "We have had no raises for two years," said Eduardo Rodriguez, a 25-year employee at the company, who runs a wrapping machine. "For the past year, we worked one hour per week without pay at the company's request, on the promise of a pay raise in the new union contract. Now they say there will be no raise, so we are on strike."

Starting pay is \$7 per hour for these members of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 3, said Rodriguez.

"The vote last Saturday was unanimous to reject the company's proposal and go on strike. Sixty out of 65 union members attended the meeting and voted," said Larry Atkins, secretary treasurer of the local. "Four scabs were hired the first day of the strike, but none returned the next day."

Hector Fontanez, who works in ship-

ping, said the company "wants too many givebacks and no increases. They want us to go back 25 years. In this economy, prices are going up for rent, food, and milk." Fontanez pointed to a company demand to take one week's vacation from all workers.

Acme Cake Company supplies pastries, cakes, muffins, and donuts to outlets in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The company is trying to put out some production during the walkout with management personnel, and is buying goods from local nonunion bakeries in order to fill its orders.

The cops told strikers they can't picket the truck entrance to the plant, and have put up metal barricades on the sidewalk to pen the strikers into a single area.



Militant/Dan Fein

Striking bakery workers picket April 29 outside Acme Cake Company in Brooklyn.

LETTERS

Coverage of April 25

I sent Planned Parenthood an e-mail with copies of the three articles from the *Militant* on the April 25 march on Washington to defend a woman's right to choose abortion. Planned Parenthood of Greater Miami forwarded the web link to their South Florida e-mail list. The notation from Planned Parenthood is, "They wrote a very interesting column."

Why?

The *Militant's* coverage was written from inside the resistance. The bourgeois newspaper coverage was written from inside the camp of those warring on abortion and women's rights.

The *Militant* presented the facts about the march in an objective manner. It reported the speeches

accurately—while interpreting them from a working-class point of view.

It reported on the composition of the march and the political significance of the presence of more female youth, the large numbers of college women, the span of generations present, and the increase in participation by Blacks as well as the absence of organized labor union contingents.

One of the most important components of the *Militant's* coverage of the event was its response to the big political lie promoted by Democratic Party elected officials—that the Democrats defended abortion rights during the Carter and Clinton administrations.

James Kendrick
Miami, Florida

Inglés Barrio Adentro

Inglés Barrio Adentro is a program being developed in Venezuela which brings together local governments and grassroots organizations to provide the impoverished people of Venezuela the opportunity to learn English with the help of tutors (college students) from the United States. The program is being developed at the city level in three cities in Venezuela: Caracas, Barcelona, and Maracaibo. The idea is to bring volunteers who are willing to live among the people they are teaching, most probably in impoverished areas, and to provide the volunteers with the materials necessary to teach, as well as housing, food, and medical attention (if necessary).

The work to provide these things would be coordinated between neighborhood grassroots organizations and the local city governments. The volunteers would only have to contribute their knowledge and their transportation to and from Venezuela. Some two-way airplane tickets to Venezuela can be as low as \$250 (from Miami), but, of course, these prices fluctuate. This is the only major monetary cost that the volunteer is expected to incur during the trip. Another responsibility of the student volunteers would be to develop a curriculum for different levels.

Student-volunteers would benefit from being totally immersed in a foreign culture, language, and country. The volunteer is not

required to sympathize with any political ideology and all students are welcomed. The volunteer's physical safety is guaranteed by the local governments, and the sectors can be considered relatively safe as there are thousands of Cuban doctors already safely volunteering in all of these impoverished places for months.

Juan Blandón
Gainesville, Florida

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

UK coal miners mark 1984-85 strike

Unionists fought Tory government's assault on labor, mine closure plans

BY PAUL DAVIES, PAUL GALLOWAY, AND JIM SPAUL

LONDON—In mining towns across the United Kingdom, coal miners and other union supporters are taking part in meetings, rallies, and gala celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1984–85 strike by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). The celebrations have been organized by the NUM, Women against Pit Closures—an auxiliary organization of the strike—and other groups within the labor movement and mining communities.

Lasting one year, the strike pitted more than 100,000 miners and countless other working people against the mine bosses and the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, who were driving to close unprofitable mines, privatize the nationalized industry, and destroy tens of thousands of jobs. Although the miners were defeated, they retained their union and set a powerful example of militant struggle.

The anniversary of this fight has been an occasion for anti-labor forces, speaking on behalf of Britain's capitalist rulers, to slander the NUM and, by implication, all those who acted in solidarity with its stand against layoffs and in defense of union rights.

In one example, a recent documentary on the strike shown on the Channel Four television channel described picketing miners as “storm troopers” and “hit squads,” and likened union actions to a “blitzkrieg”—comments reminiscent of Thatcher's statement during the strike that the miners were “the enemy within.”

Kim Howells, the Transport Minister in the current Labour Party government, took a less frontal line of attack on BBC News Online March 10, saying that the Conservative, or Tory, government's pit [mine] closure program “should not have meant a strike.” Howells was a research officer for the NUM during the 1984–85 strike. Mine closures carried out by Labour 20 years earlier were “done in a civilized way,” he said.

The Thatcher government prepared ahead of time to take on the NUM, which had frequently been an obstacle to the rulers' attacks. In the previous decade the NUM had twice defeated a Tory govern-

ment in big confrontations—most humilatingly in 1974, when the government of Prime Minister Edward Heath was forced to step down after failing to break a national strike by miners.

In 1980 and 1982 the parliament passed laws banning the closed shop and limiting

ain's 187,000 miners had downed tools.

The miners used large-scale pickets to stop production, moving from mine to mine as the situation demanded. Their militant actions drew solidarity from other unionists and from working people more broadly.

Police used roadblocks and direct at-

picket lines, and spoke at solidarity meetings. In the words of the Yorkshire *Miner*, they were “the strike's backbone.”

In the course of the strike, vanguard miners reaching out for solidarity also began seeing the connections between their struggle and other fights against oppression and exploitation. In August 1984, for example, several miners took part in a delegation of trade unionists to British-occupied Northern Ireland. Kent miners leader Malcolm Pitt spoke at a demonstration demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. “The people of Ireland, the British miners, and the British working class are locked in a struggle with the same enemy but on different fronts,” he said.

Divisions at Nottingham

Not all the mines were struck, however. The government succeeded in carving off the Nottingham area, scene of some of the largest confrontations of pickets and police.

One of the authors of this article, Paul Galloway, was employed at the 12,000-worker Thorseby colliery in Nottingham—one of 80 out of 12,000 who stayed out for the duration of the strike. At first, more than 50 percent of miners honored the Nottingham picket lines. Miners had to confront tens of thousands of police, while soldiers drove police vehicles during some of the battles. The besieged union supporters were fortified by miners from other areas, who came to strengthen the picket lines. Pickets who left the area had to skirt police lines to get back in. Some camped for days on end in Sherwood Forest before making it back to the lines.

The seeds of the Nottingham division had been sown by the previous Labour government, which established a bonus system that frequently paid workers in the productive Nottingham pits twice the national average. Thatcher's ministers deepened divisions by claiming the Nottingham mines would not be affected by the planned closures.

The failure of the leadership of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the national union federation, to mobilize the unions in support of the strike dealt another telling blow to the miners' fight. For his part, Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock attacked the pickets' alleged “violence” while keeping silent about the brutal police attacks.

In February 1985 a special delegates conference narrowly voted to return to work.

Although the NUM continued to reject the bosses' pit closure program, the government accelerated its layoffs and closures in the years that followed. In 1992, in the face of an escalation of the pit closure program, threatening 25,000 jobs, the TUC called a protest march in London that drew hundreds of thousands of people.

By 1995 the total number of miners in the UK had dropped to 11,000, down from 187,000 ten years before. Yet the NUM remains an obstacle to the bosses' continuing drive for speedup and longer hours. In 2001 NUM members at Rossington colliery in Yorkshire organized the first indefinite strike since the yearlong strike.

Since March, NUM members at Kellingley colliery in north Yorkshire have organized several of one-day strikes and an overtime ban to oppose attempts to extend the working day and impose weekend working.

In the battles that lie ahead, workers will turn to the miners' fight, drawing inspiration and lessons from the yearlong strike.

Paul Galloway and Jim Spaul are former miners who worked underground for 18 and 36 years, respectively.



May 1984 march in Edinburgh, Scotland, in solidarity with miners' fight. The year-long coal strike won the backing of working people throughout the United Kingdom as the miners confronted the union-busting of Margaret Thatcher, prime minister at the time.

picket lines to no more than six workers. A specially commissioned report by Tory Member of Parliament (MP) Nicholas Ridley proposed building up coal stocks in preparation for the fight, and recommended the organization of large mobile police squads for use against picket lines.

A strike against closures

The strike began March 5, 1984, after the government announced it was shutting Yorkshire's Cortonwood colliery—the first of 20 mines, employing 20,000, scheduled for closure. Within one week, half of Brit-

tacks to try to throttle and intimidate the pickets. In 12 months, they arrested 10,000 miners and injured 5,000 in attacks against pickets.

Two miners, David Jones and Joe Green, were killed on the picket line. Green, who worked at Kellingley colliery, was killed at Ferrybridge Power Station, struck by the back wheel of a truck as it crossed the line. Three striking miners were killed digging for coal to keep their families warm.

The government won a court order sequestering the union's funds as fines for “illegal picketing.”

In a June 18 confrontation, the NUM organized a mass picket of Orgreave coking plant to force its closure, at least temporarily. Around 5,000 miners faced up to 8,000 cops outfitted with riot gear and swinging truncheons. Cops rode horses into the pickets and set dogs on them. Miners defended themselves tenaciously and many were arrested.

In August dockworkers refused to handle coal imported to break the strike. Workers in the National Union of Railwaymen stopped almost all movement of coal, oil, and iron ore by rail. Their action was particularly important where the strike was not so strong. Despite the fact that only 30 of the 2,500 miners in Coalville, Leicestershire, were on strike, for example, coal mined there was never moved because of solidarity action by the town's 150 rail workers, who stood solid throughout the strike despite the sacking of three of their number.

Strike support groups were established in small towns and major cities. In south Wales dairy farmers donated 20,000 gallons of milk to picket lines and joined Women Against Pit Closures in a demonstration against a visit by Margaret Thatcher to the area.

Organized in Women against Pit Closures and other groups, women in the mining communities stood at the forefront of the struggle. Maureen Douglas from the Hatfield Main miners' wives support group explained at a demonstration in Barnsley of 12,000 women that “what we are doing... is making history. We are setting a pattern for the future for the involvement of women in political struggles which will show what a formidable force we are.”

Women organized food relief, joined

Kellingley miners in UK hold one-day walkout



Militant/Jim Spaul

Miners outside Kellingley coal mine in north Yorkshire during April 30 one-day strike—the latest in a series of 24-hour stoppages by the National Union of Mineworkers against new shift patterns and longer hours demanded by UK Coal. “We work to live, not live to work,” said miner Steve Ellison. “It's not about money. We don't mind working shifts but we don't want to work draconian shifts for a profit-making scheme.” The bosses' latest proposal aims to dodge a direct confrontation with the Kellingley miners, Ellison said. The company says it will move 180 miners from the nearby Selby mines to Kellingley in June when Selby closes, to work 12-hour night shifts with Sunday as part of the working week. Another one-day strike was scheduled for May 4.

—JOYCE FAIRCHILD AND JIM SPAUL